

Moonlight Hours

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Rating: R(-ish)... more PG-12, actually

Summary: To moonlight hours, there was a magic undeniable. And irresistible.

Disclaimer: It's all Paramount. I don't know why, but it is.

A/N: Inspired by a fiddle made by Rachael on VAMB (you'll find the pic on deltastory dot org in the POD archive - it's the one from Nov. 16th.) Plus, I needed some fluff after finishing Before Dishonor.

The quiet outside was even more deafening than the noise inside the ball room.

In a rare moment when no one had been watching - or trying to talk them to death - Kathryn Janeway, captain of the Starship Voyager, and her first officer, Commander Chakotay, had taken the chance to get away from the masses, music and madness filling the gigantic celebration hall.

It was just another day in the Delta Quadrant, just another first contact with another interesting species. Their alien encounter roulette had been generous this time, and so Voyager's crew had been welcomed warmly by these people who called themselves Ksidyens. They were peaceful, loved everything indulging - and they especially loved to celebrate. New friends certainly were a very good reason to celebrate, and so, within half a day, Voyager had found herself on the planet's surface and her crew, from the moment they left the ship, surrounded by cheerful, hospitable Ksidyen men, women and children.

The aliens had insisted on throwing a 'little party' - which probably was the understatement of all time. The ball room was so huge Voyager would have fitted inside, and it seemed that the complete Ksidyen population was present to welcome the travelers. There was laughter and dancing and chatting, and lots, *lots* of food and drink. Soon, even the most skeptic and cautious individual had to admit that these people didn't hide any ill intentions behind all their friendliness. They *were* friendly.

And still, that didn't help the fact that they also were... exhausting. They had too much energy and excitement in them to compete or keep up with, and for Voyager's leading duo, at some point in the evening, it just became too much.

The night was fresh, but not cold, and the moon shone in a deep purple color down onto them when they slipped out through one of the glass doors and into the semi-dark provided by man-high bushes and plants. From there, they took a long detour through the gardens surrounding the building to reach the marble archway that led from the ball room to a small lake, all the time doing their best to not be spotted by anyone on the terrace.

They took a deep breath when they finally reached their destination, the lake's end of the archway. The music from the party was barely audible there, as they were a good few hundred meters away from it, and shadows from the trees around the lake, rocked gently by a light breeze, gave a play of dancing ghosts and covered the couple beneath them.

For a while, they said nothing; they simply savored the quiet, calming and just a bit mysterious atmosphere of a night that enveloped them in a bluish-red hue and made everything look that certain little bit different. Seconds, minutes, and maybe even more time of comfortable silence between them passed before Janeway chuckled, earning herself a questioning glance from Chakotay.

"Do you believe that?" She obviously didn't expect her companion to answer, as she went on right away, "Day in, day out, I wear shoes with three-inch heels, and one would think I'm used to it, but these sandal... high heel... things are literally killing my feet." She groaned when she opened the fastener, loosening the bands that cut into her skin, and slipped out of her heels. When her feet touched the cold marble floor, she sighed in relief. Picking the shoes up and dangling them, each held on the back string, from her right index finger, she smiled - an expression that mixed joy and mischief into her features.

While she was entertaining herself - and him - Chakotay didn't even attempt to comment. He simply leaned back against one of the archway's low side walls, freeing himself of the bow-tie around his neck - his way to express that he didn't have any intention to go back to the festivities, but rather spent the rest of the evening with his captain in this relaxing environment - and watched her with amusement, curiosity, and that usual little bit, or bit more, of adoration.

More than four decades of life, but he had never seen a woman more impressive and amazing than her, with her intelligence, her bravery, her compassion, her *passion*, and her beauty. And as she was standing before him, in a midnight blue dress that was held by only a strap around the back of her neck and hugging her in just the right places, with her feet bare, and with a sparkle in her eyes he was sure he had never seen before, he knew that there simply, by the laws of nature, couldn't be anything more breathtaking than her.

At first, he was so busy watching and admiring her, drinking in the sight that was itself presenting to him, that he didn't see her giving him a curious look. Only when she took a step closer to him, now barely an arm's length away, he brought his focus back to the present.

"Are you alright?" Janeway asked, worry evident in her voice; and yet it was still filled with mirth. Her whole body language spoke volumes of happiness and content. Chakotay regarded her with a thoughtful expression on his face, before he tilted his head to one side.

"Perfect," was his answer after a few moments, and the way he was saying it didn't make it clear whether he was talking about himself - or her. His voice was so deep and thick with desire and his stare became so intense that it almost made her stumble backwards. She never came that far, however, because suddenly his hand was reaching out towards her, and, taking hold of her waist, he pulled her to him.

Kathryn gasped when her body came in contact with his muscular torso and legs, the feeling of those hard plains and the heat radiating from them against her soft curves creating a sensation she had thought long since forgotten to her. She had no idea she could still feel this way, still lose control over her body, her senses, like she was about to now. Chakotay's big, strong hands held her waist enclosed and firmly pressed against him, and she had to lean back, almost struggle to move, to get a look at his face.

Something she perhaps shouldn't have done.

His eyes appeared to be completely black in the faint light, and she still read this intensity in them she had seen before, something she now identified as a desire she wasn't sure she would ever be able to fulfill. He wanted her - body *and* soul.

"Chakotay..." she whispered, but he shook his head, his eyes never leaving hers.

"Don't say anything, Kathryn," he told her, his voice equally low, and then one hand left her waist to have its index finger trail down the side of her face and neck, before returning to the middle of her body. The woman in his arms let her head fall back at his touch, a moan escaping her throat, and he took the opportunity to place a hot, longing kiss at her neck; and then another one; and another.

Only when he refrained from his actions, her head came back up slowly, and the hand not holding her shoes wound around his neck while her eyes met his again, now matching the yearning and lust that was showing in his.

They looked at each other for a long moment in complete silence, the sizzling tension between them consuming their senses and making them forget where they were, who they were - and what they weren't supposed to do.

And then, within the blink of an eye, Kathryn leaned in, crushed her lips against his, claiming them in a searing kiss, the passion in the touch taking both their breath away. Somewhere distant to his ears Chakotay heard her shoes fall to the ground before her other arm also wrapped around him, her hand at the back of his head holding him to her desperately like he was her only source of air, of *life*.

Chakotay's hands were splayed on the small of her back and her hips, adding to the heat that was already boiling inside her. Every nerve ending in her body was on high alert, feeling even the tiniest move of his fingers through the flimsy material of her dress, the rise and fall of his chest, and the hardness in his mid-section becoming more prominent by the second. Weakened by the ferocity of their encounter and overwhelming impressions, Kathryn's legs almost gave out from under her, and she would have helplessly fallen down had Chakotay not wound his arms around her delicate form and held her upright, molding her body into his - she was sure that there wasn't a single part of her not pressed to him.

Hungrily they devoured each other's mouths, indulged in each other's taste and feel, eager to forever remember that moment in case it should never happen again. But then, neither of them wanted this first time to be the last one as well. This was too good, and too much, too long desired and deserved to be declared a momentary slip in their otherwise well-trained continence.

Because this was everything, just not a moment of weakness.

When Kathryn finally pulled back, she remained within millimeters of his mouth, trying to catch her breath and willing her heart to slow down again. She could see and feel that he was trying to do the same, desperately fighting for control over his labored breathing and the emotions rushing through him.

Bringing her hand that had rested at the back of his head around to cup his cheek, she placed another kiss, albeit a soft and gentle one this time, against his still-open lips, and Chakotay opened his eyes at the gesture, locking them with hers - baring his soul to her.

And Kathryn failed miserably in swallowing her tears.

No words were needed to tell her of his feelings for her; she could have been blind, and still she had seen the deep and unconditional love he carried in his heart; a love that was solely reserved for her. Neither did she have to voice her own feelings, because it was all there in her eyes for him to read, as well. His heart missed several beats when he at last saw the truth he'd waited to see for so many years.

Before she knew what was happening to her, Chakotay loosened his embrace, leaned down and, putting his arm around her legs, swooped her up into his arms to then carry her towards the lakeside and a small pavilion he had spotted earlier that day.

As they vanished into the night, a pair of watchful eyes followed them and the mouth belonging to the same face as the eyes curled into a content smile.

Whoever realized that they were gone didn't worry. And especially not the smiling woman, Njykela, eldest and wisest of the Ksidyen. She had noticed the captain and her first officer leaving the festivities earlier, and kept an eye on them. But she had no intention of bringing them back or draw anyone's attention to their absence. They weren't to be disturbed.

Because there was a saying Njykela had been told when she was still a child; a saying each and every Ksidyen knew:

Moonlight hours belonged to lovers.

END